



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/775,881

02/10/2004

Luc Lemmens

1316N-001663

1429

27572

7590

12/11/2006

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.

P.O. BOX 828

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303

EXAMINER

SCHWARTZ, CHRISTOPHER P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3683

DATE MAILED: 12/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/775,881

Applicant(s)

LEMMENS ET AL.

Examiner

Christopher P. Schwartz

Art Unit

3683

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 7-17 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

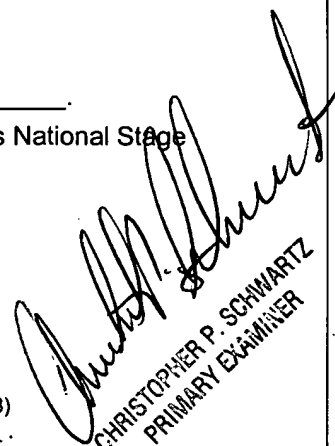
- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

  
CHRISTOPHER P. SCHWARTZ  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

### DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114 was filed in this application after a decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, but before the filing of a Notice of Appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit or the commencement of a civil action. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114 and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the appeal has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114 and prosecution in this application has been reopened pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 3, 2006 has been entered.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Regarding claim 1, as now amended, and looking to the claimed embodiment of figure 4 and the description on page 12 describing the claimed embodiment, the specification never states that when membrane 52b is in the closed or second position that it "*prevents fluid flow through the fluid passage*" (the "passage " being identified as being 130 in the spec and drawings). On the contrary, figure 4 shows via two arrows,

Art Unit: 3683

the path of fluid flow when the "lower membrane 52b" is in the "closed" position, or is in the seated position on the land. Therefore, applicant's added limitation to claim 1 of "... the fluid passage is closed to prevent fluid flow through the fluid passage" is considered to be new matter since it was not described in the specification at page 12, or shown in figure 4, in the claimed manner.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vermolen et al. in view of de Molina

Regarding claim 1, subject to the 112 first above, Vermolen et al. discloses a container having first and second chambers 36,40, a piston rod 44, a piston 38, a valve 60 (note the aperture at 106 or 98), a membrane 78 defining an "aperture" 106,108, a pressure signal supplied from an air spring to the valve (see col 3 lines 37-41), the valve functioning as claimed. Lacking in Vermolen et al. is a prevention of fluid flow through the restriction 108 around the land when membrane 78 is in it's lower most position. However, Vermolen et al. states in column 5 lines 20+ that the aperture 106 and the thickness of shim disc 78 are "tuning parameters of the shock absorber" and that the "size of the restriction 108 will be controlled by the size of hole 106, the thickness of shim disc 78..." See also lines 62-65. Vermolen et al. shows a relatively sloped membrane relative to the surface of the land, presumably to create the restriction 108.

De Molina et al. shows and describes a similar arrangement in figure 4. See the discussion in column 6 lines 34-57. Although it is never stated the flexible discs 136 actually contact the land 160, presumably this could happen with enough "control pressure" applied to chamber 158 to stiffen the damping characteristics of the absorber for a particular application.

To have applied these teachings to Vermolen et al., given the discussion therein, would have amounted only to a slight obvious variation to this reference for the reason above.

Regarding claim 2 note downtube 62. The chambers 36,40 communicate with an outlet at either 92 or 94 to in turn communicate with each other, as broadly claimed.

Regarding claim 3, as broadly claimed, these requirements are met at 78 in figure 3.

Regarding claims 5,6 these requirements are met. Note the discussion in column 3 and the control lines at 32.

Regarding claim 4 simply to have used more than one disk in the area of 78 of Vermolen et al., as taught by de Molina at 136, would have been obvious to the ordinary skilled worker in the art simply to control the level of fluid flow through the valve to a desired level and therefore attain the damping characteristics desired from the suspension system. Note the through-hole at 106.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

7. Claims 7-17 remain allowed.

***Response to Arguments***

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-6 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

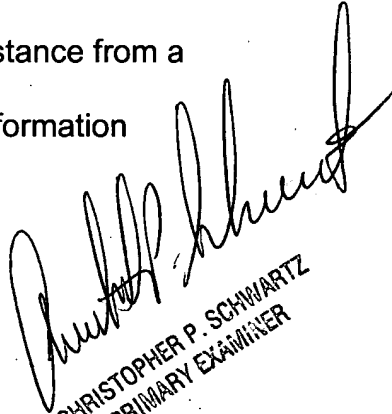
9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher P. Schwartz whose telephone number is 571-272-7123. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 10:30-7:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jim McClellan can be reached on 571-272-6786. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3683

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Cps  
12/7/06

  
CHRISTOPHER P. SCHWARTZ  
PRIMARY EXAMINER